

NEWS RELEASE

**OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
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For Immediate Release

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Ronald J. Tenpas, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced today that on January 15, 2004, **MARIO L. GORDON**, a/k/a “Rio,” age 23, of Chicago, Illinois, was convicted by a jury in United States District Court in East St. Louis, Illinois. GORDON was convicted of conspiracy to distribute more than five grams of crack cocaine, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, §§ 841 and 846, and possession with intent to distribute crack cocaine, in violation of Title 21, United States Code § 841. The offenses occurred between December 2001 and January 29, 2002, in Carbondale, Illinois.

GORDON’s conspiracy offense carries a penalty of 5-40 years’ imprisonment, a fine of up to \$2,000,000, and a term of 4 years’ supervised release. The possession with intent to distribute crack cocaine offense carries a penalty of up to 20 years’ imprisonment, a fine of up to \$1,000,000, and a term of 3 years’ supervised release. GORDON is set for sentencing on April 23, 2004.

Co-defendant Kenneth Johns, a/k/a “Kilo,” has already been sentenced to 168 months’ imprisonment for his role in the crack cocaine conspiracy. Co-defendant Daniel W. Ross, a/k/a “Chino,” has pled not guilty and is awaiting a January 27, 2004, jury trial.

The investigation was conducted by the Carbondale Police Department, Jackson County Sheriff’s Office, Drug Enforcement Administration, and Southern Illinois Enforcement Group pursuant to their participation in the Jackson County Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative. Under the Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative, federal, state, and local law enforcement and prosecutors are working together to prosecute drug dealers, felons in possession of firearms, and criminals that use firearms to commit violent offenses or drug trafficking offenses in the system that will get them the most time. The Jackson County Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative is a joint and cooperative effort of the United States Attorney’s Office, Jackson County States Attorney’s Office, Drug Enforcement Administration, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, Carbondale Police Department, Jackson County Sheriff’s Office, Murphysboro Police Department, and Southern Illinois Enforcement Group.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Amanda A. Robertson.